

Working for the people and communities of the 32nd District



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- Chair, Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Trade Policy
- Capital Budget
- Community and Economic Development and Trade
- Select Committee on Environmental Health



Rep. Chase visits with her grandson Chase Simerka on Kids' Day in the Legislature.

Representative Maralyn Chase

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Dear Neighbors,

The challenges we all face in our everyday lives in our state and community can become *opportunities* for innovation and improvement. The challenges and opportunities faced by 32nd District residents are my top priorities as your representative, and your concerns about education, our environment and the cost of health care are at

the top of my list. I am pleased to bring you my report on these priorities.

We all know the state of Washington invests in our district's educational system and transportation infrastructure. But several other important state institutions are also greatly impacted by the legislative budgeting process and public policy decisions:

➤ **Fircrest School**

Most of the old WWII buildings have been demolished and we are developing the master plan for the surplus property—which includes smart growth principles and affordable housing. The Fircrest property will truly become a global example of urban planning for sustainable development.

➤ **Washington State Public Health Lab**

The Public Health Lab has expanded its mission to become the state's lead bioterrorism-response laboratory. In response to concerns I've raised on behalf of our community, the Department of Health will soon undertake a risk analysis to see if these activities are compatible with a residential and educational community.

➤ **Saint Edward State Park**

We are identifying a use for the beautiful seminary building at Saint Edward State Park that will be compatible with the passive wilderness experience in an urban area, which was a condition for obtaining the park.

➤ **Shoreline Community College**

The Shoreline Community College is celebrating its new student union building and is preparing to co-host, with the Shoreline Chamber of Commerce, a Green Business Fair on June 10. We are also celebrating the start of the Solar Energy/Green Jobs Program in partnership with Washington State University.

These activities have reconfirmed my belief in the power of citizens to craft innovative solutions to challenges and create incredible opportunities for our state and community.

I thank all the citizens who have shared the challenges they face and their suggestions for improvement with me. We received a record number of responses to our pre-session survey and we read every single one of them! Please continue to share your views and suggestions with me. Keeping in touch makes me a stronger voice for our communities.

Regards and respects,

Maralyn



Representative Maralyn Chase • 32nd District

Education for the Next Washington

Our Constitution says our number one investment must be education. In the last three years almost half of our increased funding has gone to education. Despite these improvements, state leaders clearly *must* do a better job of funding education. We established the Basic Education Finance Task Force to map strategies for the future of education funding in Washington. It is rethinking the very definition of “basic education” and reworking the formulas that drive state resources to local schools—including current salary allocations that treat many school districts unfairly.

Leaders cannot afford to be satisfied with the status quo, least of all when it comes to educating children for future success. I hope citizens will join me in advocating for better state support of our local schools.



Secure Communities with Affordable Housing

Residents who have lived in modestly priced buildings for decades are suddenly finding that they are turned out on the street—through no fault of their own—because an investor bought their building for a condo conversion. Over 17,000 units have been converted in the last four years with a net loss of almost 5,000 units. Vacancy rates are driven down while rents are driven up and community security is lost.

Recognizing that renters and communities urgently need more tools to cope with condo conversions, lawmakers voted overwhelmingly to enact my proposed answer—House Bill 2014—into law.

Our new law requires developers to give 120 days notice prior to a condo conversion, and protects tenant rights during that period. It also allows—not mandates, but *allows*—local governments to require developers to pay more relocation assistance for residents displaced by

condo conversions. The current \$500 ceiling on relocation assistance is practically a recipe for homelessness. My reform allows assistance equivalent to 3 months rent, which makes much more sense.

My reform is about local control and fairness for community residents. For communities that have seen too many families and senior citizens forced from affordable housing into homeless shelters and personal tragedy, it is a small but meaningful step toward justice.



Education as preparation for life

Earning a high school diploma, or passing the WASL, does not necessarily mean students have met the *entrance standards* for life after high school. You can see this in college

drop-out rates and in the lack of workforce-entry skills that people need to get living-wage jobs. That is why I was pleased to support comprehensive Career and Technical Education (CTE) reforms this year.

These reforms will require *all* preparatory (not exploratory) CTE programs to either lead to a state or nationally recognized industry certification OR allow students to earn dual high school and college credit. At the same time, we created a new \$100 million fund to help local school districts build new skills centers and schools. These changes will improve workforce entry, apprenticeship and academic study. More importantly, they will enable more students to take control of their own lives and recognize that there are multiple pathways for success in life.



Pew Center on Global Climate Change

I was honored to be one of three legislators in the nation invited by the Pew Climate Trust to Washington D.C. to deliberate on the potential future roles of government—local, state and federal—in meeting the challenges of climate change. With Gov. Gregoire at the helm, the state of Washington has harnessed the leadership of our mayors, county executives and all levels of state government to make us a national leader in these efforts.

We've learned that many issues central to climate change are really local issues. How big is our personal and our community's carbon footprint? What are the best ways to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions? Although we need the federal government to set national standards and initiatives that cross all borders and level the playing field for everyone, we really need leadership coming from *every* direction to make the smart resource decisions that are necessary to combat climate change. State and local governments, community councils, regional and governmental partnerships—and individual citizens—*all* have a role to play. And if we all do our part, we *will* successfully meet this challenge!

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Investing in the Green Economy

Making polluters pay the environmental costs caused by their carbon emissions will reduce pollution and create revenues to invest in clean and efficient alternatives. That is the basic idea behind a carbon tax. The Denmark model, which looks promising, is to tax industrial carbon emissions and return the revenues to industry in the form of subsidies for research and development into alternative energy sources, cleaner-burning fuel, and other environmental innovations.



I proposed House Bill 2420 to create a carbon tax and a “climate action fund authority” that would use carbon-tax revenues to fund strategies for reducing state greenhouse gas emissions and investing in the green economy. The amount of revenue generated by a carbon tax would be directly tied to the current pollution levels and would decline over time as lower pollution levels are achieved.

My House Bill 2421 is based on ground-breaking work we accomplished in 2005 to create cost-recovery incentives that support residential renewable energy projects. My bill would expand that program by establishing an account for “Carbon-free Commercial Scale Energy Generation.” This would provide needed support for renewable energy projects on commercial, local government, and not-for-profit properties.

Neither of these bills was enacted during the short session, but they did help to start a needed discussion on *why* we must reduce carbon emissions and *how* this goal might be achieved. These will surely be issues for many years to come.

Green Jobs in the Clean Economy

The Northwest Solar Center—a partnership between WSU’s Energy Extension Program and Shoreline Community College in building the clean economy—continues to flourish. The innovative partnership is training skilled specialists in zero-energy building design.

I’m also excited that Shoreline Community College is offering a new program this spring, taught by WSU’s Mike Nelson—the Solar/Photovoltaic (Electric) PV Designer Certificate program. This five-credit, five-week course will teach the basics of design and installation for both residential and commercial solar electric systems. Students who complete the course will receive a solar system design certificate. This new credit program will lead to a degree in Zero Energy Technology. ***Shoreline is the first community college in the Puget Sound region to provide credit degree training for Green Jobs! Congratulations, Shoreline CC!***



Rep. Chase and constituents share ideas about recycling.

The “100 Year” Flood: A Storm water Challenge

We have paved over too much land with impervious surfaces and now find that storm water is cascading downstream into basements and lakes, with mud and silt threatening both Lake Ballinger and Lake Washington. We can address these problems by promoting smarter development practices.

My House Bill 3343 would promote **low impact development** strategies aimed at restoring watersheds and reducing the flooding problems plaguing our urban streams. These strategies address storm-water issues through small, cost-effective landscape features at the lot level and would focus on natural drainage solutions instead of standard piping and detention solutions. Whether or not this bill ultimately becomes law, it is clear that we must get smarter about storm-water and drainage issues. Otherwise, we, our economy and our environment will pay an increasingly heavy price for our failure.



Representative Maralyn Chase • 32nd District

Health Insurance Costs



I know the cost of health insurance is a primary concern of the people in our district. I continue to work for the passage of laws to lower health-care costs and limit the amount of surplus that non-profit companies may accumulate.

Recent annual reports that insurance companies file with the insurance commissioner show that the Big-3 insurance companies—Group Health, Premera and Regence—increased their surplus by \$267 million last year! Further, these so-called “non-profit” insurers were required to pay millions of dollars in federal income tax. In fact, they are now holding almost \$1.8 *billion* in *excess* surplus—and their premiums just go higher and higher!

Do the “non-profit” trustees own that money, or do the people who pay the premiums own it? How much reserve



do these non-profits really need for solvency? The state requires a minimum of two months of expected claims in reserves.

There is no reason on earth why “non-profit” insurers should be accumulating that kind of wealth at the expense of Washington’s families.

Instead of using surplus investment and premium revenues to reduce the cost of health insurance, they are using it for purposes like subsidizing for-profit businesses in other states and paying lavish salaries to their administrators. Enough is enough!

When the state’s insurance plan, The Uniform Medical Plan, collected too much in revenues, Gov. Gregoire ordered a refund of over \$750 to most state employees. Don’t you think the state should require a similar break for all Washington residents who were forced to pay too much for their health insurance?

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